

VZCZCXRO3300

RR RUEHAO RUEHCD RUEHGA RUEHGD RUEHGR RUEHHA RUEHHO RUEHMC RUEHNG
RUEHNL RUEHQU RUEHRD RUEHRG RUEHRS RUEHTM RUEHVC
DE RUEHSG #0179 0261811
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 261811Z JAN 06
FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 8323
INFO RUEHWH/WESTERN HEMISPHERIC AFFAIRS DIPL POSTS
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0124
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHMFISS/HQ USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC

UNCLAS SANTIAGO 000179

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [SOCI](#) [PINR](#) [CI](#)

SUBJECT: PREPARATIONS UNDERWAY FOR BACHELET'S MARCH 11
INAUGURATION

REF: SANTIAGO 00170

¶1. The Chilean government has initiated preparations for the inauguration of President-elect Michelle Bachelet and the new Congress on March 11. According to the Foreign Ministry's Protocol Office and press reports, the inauguration activities are likely to include:

--March 10: President Lagos will receive/meet with foreign dignitaries at La Moneda presidential palace in Santiago. He will then host a dinner at La Moneda.

--March 11: Inauguration ceremony will begin at 12:00 noon local time (10:00 EST) in Valparaiso (the physical location of Congress; approximately one hour's drive from Santiago). A cultural event in Santiago will follow.

¶2. President Lagos recently designated Javier Luis Egana, former ambassador to the Vatican and current director of the secretariat of communications and culture (SECOCU) at the

SIPDIS

Interior Ministry, to coordinate inauguration activities. According to press reports, Egana has extensive experience in this area, having run all three previous presidential inauguration ceremonies (Presidents Aylwin, Frei-Ruiz-Tagle and Lagos) since Chile's return to democracy. On January 25, Egana told the press the GOC had sent out invitations to the heads of state of the 171 countries with which Chile has diplomatic relations, as well as several unspecified "important invitees." (Note: Bolivian President Evo Morales reportedly has accepted an invitation, personally extended by President Lagos during their January 22 meeting in La Paz.)

Bachelet's First Appointment

¶3. Bachelet recently appointed Fernando Ayala, current Chilean ambassador to Vietnam and a career diplomat, as her future head of protocol at the Foreign Ministry. According to press reports, Ayala is considered close to Chilean UN PermRep, Hernando Munoz, one of the frontrunners mentioned as Bachelet's possible Foreign Minister (Ref. A).

¶4. MFA/Protocol officer Rodrigo Donoso told EPOL assistant January 25 that the GOC would intensify planning for the inauguration early next week, after Ayala returns to Santiago. In an apparent contradiction with Egana's press comments, Donoso said the GOC had not yet actually sent out official invitations.

¶5. Post will remain in contact with GOC officials regarding the inauguration, and report developments as they become available.

Fernando Ayala Bio Note

¶6. Fernando Ayala graduated from Chile's Diplomatic Academy in 1984. He has served as Consul in Chicago and Stockholm, and Consul General in Milan. In 2004, he became Chile's first ambassador to Vietnam. In the late 1990s, Ayala became active in Party for Democracy (PPD) politics, where he built his relationship with Chilean UN PermRep Munoz. In 2000-2001, he worked as Munoz' chief of staff when the latter served as Deputy Foreign Minister. He then followed Munoz to the Presidential Palace after Munoz was appointed by President Lagos as government spokesperson. In 2003, Ayala moved to the Ministry of Education, where he worked as an international advisor to then Minister Sergio Bitar. He has also served as Foreign Ministry Director General of Administration (1992-94), and Advisor to the Director General of International Economic Relations - DIRECON (1999-2001). During the Pinochet era, Ayala lived in exile in Croatia, where he earned an economics degree from the University of Zagreb. He also holds a master's degree in political science from Catholic University in Chile.

KELLY